United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1103
20 March 1992

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Iraq discloses new information about its weapons programmes; the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission on Iraqi Disarmament calls disclosure "good news".

+ United Nations technical team, headed by Robert Gallagher of Canada, to travel to Mogadiscio on Monday, 23 March, to address questions of cease-fire monitoring and humanitarian assistance.

+ Secretary-General addresses solemn meeting of Anti-apartheid Committee on occasion of International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; General Assembly President says racism and racial discrimination are serious rights violations which must be combated in South Africa and in occupied territories.

+ Inter-Agency Humanitarian Programme for Iraq, Kuwait and Iraqi border areas reports shortfall of $62 million in funding; says security situation in northern Iraq "continues to deteriorate".

* * *

The Special Commission on Iraqi Disarmament announced today that it had received a letter from the Iraqi authorities indicating their intention to undertake the destruction of the items associated with Iraq's ballistic missiles programmes.

In a press release issued at Headquarters, the Commission disclosed it had also received important new information concerning Iraq's ballistic missiles and chemical weapons capabilities. Furthermore, Iraq states its willingness to make the full, final and complete disclosure of its programmes that the Commission had being seeking all along. The information was being assessed by the Commission.

The Commission received the letter yesterday at a meeting between the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission, Rolf Ekeus, and the Permanent

(more)

For information media—not an official record

Representative of Iraq, Abdul al-Amir Al-Anbari, following a series of meetings between the Iraqi delegation and officials from the Special Commission last week.

At a press conference at Headquarters today, Mr. Ekeus called the information from Iraq "good news", saying "it confirms our concerns, but it also demonstrates a new attitude from Iraq."

* * *

A United Nations spokesman announced today that the 15-member technical team bound for Somalia would be headed by Robert Gallagher of Canada and would go to Mogadiscio on Monday, 23 March, after regrouping in Nairobi over the weekend.

The Secretary-General had proposed to send such a team to Somalia to prepare for a United Nations "monitoring mechanism" of the cease-fire agreement of 3 March, and to seek agreement on "unimpeded delivery" of humanitarian assistance. The Secretary-General's plan was endorsed by the Security Council on Tuesday.

According to the spokesman, the team would also visit the Somali cities of Berbera and Kismaya, where it would address the question of provision of humanitarian assistance. On 2 April, the team would return to Nairobi to finalize its report, before flying back to Headquarters on 5 April.

The team consists of three people contributed by Governments (including the team leader); political, peace-keeping and humanitarian staff from the United Nations; one representative each from the Organization of African Unity (OAU), League of Arab States and Organization of the Islamic Conference, and a representative from a non-governmental organization.

* * *

The results of the recent referendum in South Africa had clearly demonstrated that the overwhelming majority of white South Africans support the negotiating process for a non-racial democracy, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said today in a statement on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

At a solemn meeting held by the Special Committee Against Apartheid, he said that the outcome underlined the commitment of the South African people to reform and change through peaceful means and provided a fresh and compelling impetus to the negotiations now taking place within the framework of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa.

The United Nations, which participated in that Convention in its first meeting in December as an observer, was fully committed to the negotiating process, the Secretary-General said.

(more)

In his statement today, the President of the General Assembly, Samir S. Shihabi (Saudi Arabia), reaffirmed that all forms of racism and racial discrimination, particularly in their institutionalized form, such as apartheid, or resulting from official doctrines or racial superiority, were among the most serious violations of human rights in the contemporary world. They must therefore be combated, especially in South Africa and in the occupied territories and territories under alien domination, he said.

* * *

The United Nations Inter-Agency Programme for Iraq, Kuwait and Iraq's border areas with Iran and Turkey has reported a shortfall in funding to its programmes of approximately $62 million, as of 17 March.

According to a new situation report issued today, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in Geneva says the Programme's financial status is in a "critical phase with imminent danger of reduction and even termination of some activities if contributions are not forthcoming". It reports that several Agencies require that the pledges already made be provided as soon as possible and that new pledges be made towards the budgetary shortfall.

The security situation continues to deteriorate, according to the report, with heavy artillery and helicopters introduced in the ongoing fighting in Suleimaniya and Erbil Governorates in northern Iraq. Clashes involving casualties have occurred and a bomb explosion killing three people and injuring 25 was reported in the city of Erbil on 16 March, the report says.

* *** *